

SPECIFIC NAMES IN GRATIOLA

H. A. Gleason

Of the six species of Gratiola which enter the Manual Range, only three are at all common or well distributed; a fourth occurs only from Delaware southward and again in Ohio and Kentucky, and a fifth is known from a single collection only. A sixth species is attributed to the genus by Gray's Manual and various recent authors, but has been assigned to a segregate genus by Pennell and appears under two other generic names in current Manuals. Of the six, only one, and that one the rarest in our area, has been able to continue with its traditional name unchanged through the recent epidemic of name-changing, which impresses me as a lamentable condition completely foreign to the explicitly stated basis of the International Code: "The essential points in nomenclature are: (1) to aim at fixity of names; (2) to avoid or to reject the use of forms and names which may cause error or ambiguity or throw science into confusion."

Gratiola pilosa Michx. appears under that name in Gray, seventh edition, as Sophranathe pilosa (Michx.) Small in Britton & Brown, as Tragiola pilosa (Michx.) Small & Pennell in Small's Manual and in Pennell's recent monograph. There is no competition with the specific epithet pilosa. Generic segregation or aggregation is a matter of studied scientific opinion (we hope) and the International Code neither encourages nor discourages it.

Gratiola ramosa Walter is unchallenged.

An abundant plant of the Manual Range was long known as Gratiola sphaerocarpa Ell. Since 1918 it has been generally known to American botanists that the Linnaean name G. virginiana belongs to this plant; this name has been used in the recent manuals of Small and Rydberg and in various local floras, such as those of Kentucky, Indiana, and Illinois. There is no doubt that the use of one name for two plants "tends to throw science into confusion": each of these three local floras finds it necessary to quote synonyms to make their meaning intelligible, and Fernald in a discussion of Gratiola-problems also had to use both names to insure that his meaning would be understood. Nevertheless, rules are rules, and there seems to be no way to avoid this regrettable change.

Gratiola viscosa Schw. of Gray's Manual and the Illustrated Flora is a homonym of G. viscosa Hornem. Again nothing can be done about it and the plant has been re-named G. viscidula Pennell.

Now we come to the really important cases. The most abundant and widely distributed species of the genus was long known as G. virginiana L. When that name was transferred to another species, as recounted above, this common plant was left without a name in usage. Pennell resurrected G. neglecta Torr.

(1819) and this name has since come into general usage in most recent literature. Gratiola aurea, usually accredited to Muhlberg but actually published by Pursh in 1814, is the most conspicuous local member of the genus and abundant along the Atlantic seaboard. Both of these names are antedated by G. lutea Raf. (1811). Fernald says G. lutea applies to G. "virginiana"; Pennell says it applies to G. aurea. Both have examined the type; each insists that his identification of it is correct, but Pennell bolsters his position by stating that Rafinesque himself, in a later publication, announced that Pursh's G. aurea had already been named G. lutea.

No matter which man is correct, the results are unfortunate. If Pennell is right, the well known G. aurea gets a new name. If Fernald is right, the equally well known "G. virginiana", just getting accustomed to one new name, must start out anew under a third name.

There is only one thing that can be done in this dilemma, and that is to exclude G. lutea from all consideration. That can be done under the rules. The use of G. lutea for two different species by two competent botanists, each of whom insists on the validity of his opinion and will presumably continue to use the name indefinitely into the future, will certainly be a "permanent source of confusion or error" (International Code, Art. 62). "A name of a taxonomic group must be rejected when its application is uncertain" (Article 63), which is surely the case when competent men disagree on the identification of the type.

Our species of Gratiola will then be (1) G. aurea Pursh, 1814, not G. lutea Raf. 1811, nomen dubium; (2) G. ramosa Walt.; (3) G. viscidula Pennell, 1919, not G. viscida Schw. 1824, homonym; (4) G. neglecta Torr. 1819, not G. virginiana of recent literature or G. lutea Raf. 1811, nomen dubium; (5) G. virginiana L. 1753, not G. sphaerocarpa Ell. 1816; (6) G. pilosa Michx.

Author Index to Volume Two

- Brenckle, J. F., 169, 402
 Cornman, J. F., 401
 Gleason, H. A., 201, 279, 281, 291, 294, 428, 503
 Little, E. L., Jr., 451, 457, 485
 Lundell, C. L., 1
 McNair, J. B., 33
 Merrill, E. D., 5
 Moldenke, H. N., 6, 50, 57, 65, 89, 123, 129, 152, 171, 193,
 198, 213, 242, 246, 248, 306, 325, 349, 363, 372, 382, 387,
 408, 433, 464, 477, 490, 499, 502
 Monachino, J. V., 212, 406, 432, 484
 Van Melle, P. J., 185, 249, 353